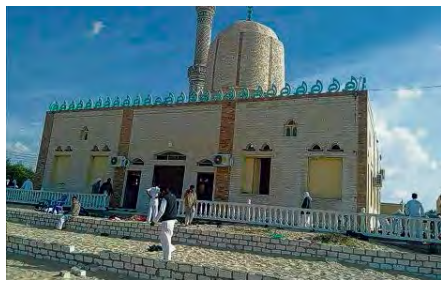


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Education lobbying group, lawmaker dispute audits

BY WILL DORAN
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RALEIGH
The largest group lobbying for North Carolina's public schools appears to be violating state law, a Republican state legislator says.
However, the North Carolina Association of Educators says it believes the state is targeting its members unconstitutionally.
The allegations deal with money - specifically, the group's

ability to collect its membership dues from the paychecks of 6,402 teachers and other school employees who opt for that method of payment.
A years-long pursuit of the NCAE by the Republican-led legislature has so far cost taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars with little to show for it. The NCAE is a major donor to Democrats.
What's known is laid out in an audit the state released earlier this month.
The audit is supposed to find

out how many members belong to groups and associations that lobby on behalf of state workers. Those types of groups can allow members to pay their dues by automatically deducting them from their paychecks, but state law has a cutoff.
Non-education groups like the State Employees Association of North Carolina have to have at least 2,000 members. But groups like the NCAE must have at least 40,000 members.
That higher requirement for the NCAE predates Republican

leadership of the state legislature, although it's unclear if state officials ever checked on these groups' membership before the GOP took charge.
The legislature started requiring the audits in 2014, after a different Republican-backed law targeting the NCAE was struck down in court as unconstitutional. But each year, the NCAE simply refuses to cooperate.
"It certainly appears NCAE is refusing to respond because it does not meet the requirement and is violating the law," Repub-

lican Sen. Ralph Hise said in an email.
Hise is a critic of the NCAE who was a driving force behind the audit requirement.
The NCAE says it doesn't have to comply with the audit.
"The NCAE believe the law as written and being implemented by the state Auditor is overly intrusive in violation of the constitutional rights of the association and its members and further exceeds the authority of the state Auditor," the group wrote in a letter to state officials earlier this year.
State Auditor Beth Wood's office agrees that it can't force the NCAE to do anything.
"We do not have the authority to compel NCAE to turn over this information because, as a private entity, NCAE does not

SEE AUDITS, 2A

BLACK FRIDAY
Shoppers
find more
than
bargains

BY ABHA BHATTARAI
Washington Post

Like millions of other Americans, Zahid Khattak headed to the mall early the day after Thanksgiving. But unlike many others, he wasn't stocking up on holiday presents. That, he said, he would do later, online.
"This is just an event — an excuse to come out," he said, as he waited for his 7-year-old daughter to get a purple butterfly painted on her cheek. "We don't really need to buy anything."
So instead, the family waited in a line for face-painting. They queued up for an artist who turned balloons into pink and green swords. They walked to Santa's workshop, complete with interactive displays. Elsewhere, there were makeovers for moms, and even a selfie stop hosted by a local radio personality in front of the Lord and Taylor.
Managers at a northern Virginia mall began planning this year's Black Friday festivities more than a year and half ago as it became clear that more shoppers were choosing to buy online. Their goal: to remind people that going to the mall can be fun, even if there's no shopping involved.
"Long before there was Cyber Monday, there was Black Friday," said Bob Mauer, Tysons Corner Center marketing manager. "We want to bring back that excitement and show people how wonderful it can be in a physical place."
The number of Americans who turn up to stores on Black Friday has declined steadily in recent years. This year, 35 percent of consumers who plan to shop during Thanksgiving week say they will do so on Black Friday, down from 51 percent last year and 59 percent the year before, according to professional services giant PWC.

SEE BLACK FRIDAY, 8A

AMINA'S GIFT Chapel Hill-to-Zimbabwe art connection gives families hope



PHOTOS BY CASEY TOTH ctoth@heraldsun.com

Terrence Brayboy has filled the yard of his home in Chapel Hill with hundreds of Zimbabwean sculptures. Brayboy, an emergency physician in Raleigh, founded the nonprofit Amina's Gift to help children and their artist parents in Zimbabwe.

BY TAMMY GRUBB
tgrubb@heraldsun.com

CHAPEL HILL
Amina was 17, frail and HIV positive from birth when Terrence Brayboy met her on a trip to Tengenenge Village in Zimbabwe.
"We had taken a bunch of clothes to give away, and I saw a young girl there," Brayboy said. "She was very sick and she couldn't come and get something, so I had one of the guys take her a pair of yellow sandals. She was just so grateful, because people had been ignoring her, because she was so sick."
Although the local clinic offered free medicine, Amina didn't have a way to get there, he said. Although they helped her get to the clinic, she died a few days later.



This stone sculpture made by an artist in Zimbabwe is on display in Brayboy's yard in Chapel Hill.

It's a common story in Zimbabwe, where UNAIDS reported roughly 40,000 new infections, about 30,000 AIDS-related deaths and 1.3 million

people living with HIV in 2016. The experience moved Brayboy to start Amina's Gift, a nonprofit that buys and sells Zimbabwean sculpture and

If you go

The African Sculpture and Craft Sale/Fundraiser for African children will be noon-4 p.m. today at 52 Dogwood Acres Drive in Chapel Hill. Contact Kaity Granda at 919-624-1344 or aminasgift@gmail.com for information.

crafts, supporting jobs for the people of that nation and raising money to provide their children with food, clothing and other basic needs. The nonprofit's five-member board includes four Chapel Hill and Raleigh residents.
"I just decided at that point

SEE AMINA, 9A

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